

On the State Budget

By Lt. Governor John Garamendi

[California Majority Report](#): My job and the job of your government is to protect your job -- today and tomorrow.

[Democrats in California's legislature were left little choice](#) but to swallow hard and accept a terrible budget deal orchestrated by Governor Schwarzenegger.

[Because of the 2/3rds vote requirement](#)

, Republicans were able to make extraordinary demands and Democrats had no choice but to accept them in order to avoid our state falling even deeper into financial chaos.

If we are to move California forward, we must end the 2/3rds vote requirement to pass a budget, and do so quickly. I will help lead the fight to change this vote requirement and end the system that has allowed the minority party to create anarchy.

The governor wants to be known as the "green governor," and the "education governor," and the "reform governor," yet he has utterly failed to lead our state in a manner that advances these goals. In fact, as a result of his ever-changing fiscal and budget policies, we have begun to move backward on each of these issues.

The [tragedy of this budget](#) is that it robs our ability to promote our values and expand our economy through the creation of a well-educated workforce. This budget provides inadequate resources to protect those most at risk and those most vulnerable. This budget does not allow transportation, water, and sanitation systems to keep up with population growth.

This budget hastens the starvation of our educational system at every level, directly and in many cases irreversibly damaging the futures of tens-of-thousands of children. At a time when California needs teachers, engineers, nurses, doctors and other high skilled workers, the University of California, the California State University and the community colleges face rapidly accelerating financial decline. This budget plainly fails to meet the educational needs of tomorrow's workforce.

President Obama is in a desperate race to revive the American economy, but this budget is not coordinated with the federal stimulus package. In fact, it is in direct conflict with much of it.

[Federal money intended to strengthen our schools is used to replace money cut from those same schools](#)

; money to provide healthcare for low-income Californians and those who have lost their healthcare because of the economic downturn, is used to replace money cut from existing programs. It is the same with money meant to support and promote public transportation. The

net effect is to undermine the president's efforts to help restart the California economy.

And what about tomorrow? This budget represents the worst in short term thinking. It will take years to reestablish yesterday's level of funding for education, healthcare and public safety. Restrictions placed on future budgets by the spending cap and the so-called rainy day fund will make it impossible for future governors and legislators to restore the greatness of our education system; rebuild our infrastructure and modernize our transportation systems.

California has always been a state with a strong, innovative, entrepreneurial private-sector, supported by an equally strong public-sector - a symbiotic relationship that created the Golden State. Our task as Democrats is to reestablish California's long tradition of investing in our public sector, promoting an efficient and effective government. In the days ahead we Democrats must rekindle the fire in our economy. And we must remember that our state government's job is to help strengthen the economy - now and in the future.